

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 15994

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SUBJECT: REACTION TO DECEMBER 1 ANNOUNCEMENT ON
RELEASE OF DETAINEES

REF: JAKARTA 15549

1. SUMMARY. REACTION TO DECEMBER 1 ANNOUNCEMENT OF
RELEASE OF 2500 CATEGORY B DETAINEES AND PLANS TO RELEASE
10,000 MORE EACH YEAR UNTIL ALL RELEASED BY 1979 GENERALLY
FAVORABLE. MUCH CREDIT WAS GIVEN TO FOREIGN PRESSURE EVEN
THOUGH GOI OFFICIALS HAD PUBLICLY DENIED THIS. EDITORIAL
COMMENTS STRESSED RELATIONSHIP OF DETAINEES TO INDONESIAN
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCENE AND HOPED FOR SMOOTH REINTEGRATION
OF DETAINEES INTO SOCIETY. END SUMMARY.

2. VICE CHAIRMAN OF PARLIAMENT DOMO PRANOTO COMMENTED TO
REPORTERS DECEMBER 8 THAT RELEASE OF 2500 POLITICAL
DETAINEES WAS NOT AIMED AT APPEASING CERTAIN GROUPS ABROAD
BUT RESULTED FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S SUCCESS IN CHANGING THE
MENTAL ATTITUDES OF THE DETAINEES AND THE WILLINGNESS OF
THE PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THEIR RETURN TO SOCIETY. HE
ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION
ON THIS SUBJECT WOULD DEFINITELY IMPROVE. DOMO PRANOTO
SAID THAT THE TIMING OF THRE RELEASE WAS PROPER IF THE
PUBLIC COULD ACCEPT THEIR RETURN, AND THEY SHOULD NOT
HAVE TOO MUCH DIFFICULTY IN FINDING EMPLOYMENT. HE
ADDED THAT IT WAS NOW THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THEIR
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FAMILIES TO SEE THAT THEY BEHAVED THEMSELVES.

3. DR. YAP THIAM HIEN, PROMINENT LAWYER AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, TOLD EMBOFF HE WAS SURE RELEASES WERE DUE PRIMARILY TO PRESSURE OF FOREIGN OPINION AND SAID U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD PLAYED SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THIS. YAP SAID THE INDONESIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO DETAINEES AND THEIR FAMILIES, WHICH HE HEADS, WILL NOW HAVE TO FOCUS ITS ACTIVITIES ON HELPING THE RELEASEES, FINDING JOBS FOR THEM, ETC. SISTER INEZ BRAUN, WHO RUNS LOCAL FRANCISCAN SISTERS' PROGRAM OF AID TO DETAINEES AND THEIR FAMILIES, HAS REPORTED THAT THE MAJORITY OF SOME 319 RELEASEES IN THE JAKARTA AREA HAVE SOUGHT THE ASSISTANCE OF HER ORGANIZATION IN MEETING IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF FOOD AND CLOTHING. SHE NOTED THAT MANY NEEDED MEDICAL ATTENTION AND THAT MOST ARE STILL UNDER HOUSE ARREST.

4. EDITORIAL IN KOMPAS CONCERNING RELEASES NOTED THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CRITICAL OF THE DETENTION OF PEOPLE ON POLITICAL GROUNDS, AND APPLAUDED THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE DETAINEE PROBLEM IN A HUMANITARIAN WAY. THE INDONESIAN TIMES POINTED OUT THAT IN DEVELOPING SOCIETIES SUCH AS INDONESIA THERE IS A GREATER NEED FOR LIMITATION OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS THAN IN DEVELOPED NATIONS, AND OBSERVED THAT AMERICAN STANDARDS COULD NOT EASILY BE APPLIED TO INDONESIAN CONDITIONS. MERDEKA WELCOMED THE RELEASE OF THE DETAINEES AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THEY WOULD SOON BE FULLY INTEGRATED INTO SOCIETY AND GIVEN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT. PELITA, THE PRO-GOVERNMENT MUSLIM PAPER, WELCOMED THE RELEASES BUT HOPED THAT SOMETHING COULD ALSO BE DONE ABOUT HELPING THOSE OFFICIALS WHO REPORTEDLY LOST THEIR GOVERNMENT JOBS BECAUSE THEY JOINED POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE 1971 ELECTION.

5. COMMENT. WHILE THE NUMBER OF LOCAL RELEASEES IS RELATIVELY SMALL AND THERE HAS AS YET BEEN LITTLE TIME TO OBSERVE THEIR RETURN TO SOCIETY, MANY OF THEM
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HAVE ACTUALLY RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES AND FAMILIES. SOME READJUSTMENT PROBLEMS WILL HAVE TO BE FACED, BUT THE GENERAL MOOD SEEMS TO BE ONE OF ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR REINTEGRATION IN INDONESIAN SOCIETY. SOME DOUBTS HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED PRIVATELY ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE FREEDOM TO BE ENJOYED BY THE GROUPS OF 10,000 TO BE RELEASED IN COMING YEARS, BUT DETAILS OF THEIR SITUATION ARE STILL SOMEWHAT UNCLEAR

AND THIS ISSUE IS NOT A RPESENT SOURCE OF PUBLIC
CONCERN.
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